Sobei language

Sobei is one of the Sarmi languages spoken in three villages (Sarmi, Sawar, and Bagaiserwar) near the district center of Sarmi in Papua province of Indonesia. Ethnologue (2005) cites two third-party population estimates of 1,000 and 1,850, while Sterner estimates the population at 1,500 (1975) and 2,000 (1987), based on actual residence in the area.

Sobei	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Papua
Ethnicity	1,850 (2000)[1]
Native speakers	1,000 (2007)[1]
Language family	Austronesian - Malayo-Polynesian - Oceanic - Western Oceanic - North New Guinea - Sarmi – Jayapura Bay - Sarmi **Sobei**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`sob`
Glottolog	`sobe1238` (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sobe1238)[2]

Contents

Phonology
  Vowels
  Consonants
Morphology
  Nouns
  Independent pronouns
  Verbs
External links
References

Phonology

Sobei reflexes of some common Austronesian etyma include *ima* 'hand', *betwe* 'star', *daidu* 'two', *faso* 'paddle', *fau* 'four', *mam* 'father', *nen* 'mother', *natu* '(his/her) child', *niwe* 'coconut', *pana* 'food', *puwe* 'betelnut', *rani* 'water', *rau* 'leaf', *-sa* 'up', *-si* 'down', *siso* 'breast', *tafi* 'sugarcane', *tano* 'rain', *temto* 'man', *tesese* 'one', *tou* 'three', *wane* 'sand', *yafu* 'fire' (all gleaned from J. Sterner 1975).

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	ɛ		o
Low		a	

Consonants

	Labial	Dental	Alveopalatal	Velar	Glottal
Voiceless stops	p	t	c	k	?
Voiced stops	b	d		g	
Fricatives	f	s			
Nasal	m	n			
Liquid		r			
Approximant	w		j		

Morphology

Nouns

Sobei distinguishes alienable possession from inalienable possession by directly suffixing nouns in the latter type of relationship, principally body parts and kin terms. The morphophonemics are often complex: *natu'* 'my child', *natun* 'his/her child', *netrirse* 'our child(ren)', *netrise* 'their child(ren)'; *dabu'sa'a* 'my head', *dabusa'a* 'his/her head', *debrirsa'a* 'our heads', *debrisa'a* 'their heads' (Sterner 1987). The following paradigm of the inalienably possessed noun *tema-* 'father' is from Sterner (1976). The intermediate *-ri-* before the possessive suffix serves as a plural marker. As an independent pronoun, *ri* is 3rd person plural ('they'). Some kin terms that do not take the possessive suffixes nevertheless have plural forms ending in -*(r)i*: *wawa-ri* 'uncle-PL', *tinan-i* 'mother-PL', *nabai-yi* 'cousin-PL' (Sterner 1976).

Person	Singular	Plural
1st person inclusive		tema-ri-rse
1st person exclusive	tema-'	tema-ri-mse
2nd person	tema-m	tema-ri-mse
3rd person	tema-n	tema-ri-se

Independent pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
1st person inclusive		rer
1st person exclusive	ya	mim
2nd person	u	yam
3rd person	e	ri

Verbs

Sobei verb stems can include a number of aspectual, reciprocal, modificational, or directional affixes, but every verb is minimally prefixed to show the grammatical person and number of its subject and grammatical mood (realis or irrealis). Mood markers differ according to whether the stem is simple or complex, and some classes of verbs show stem allomorphy in their conjugational paradigms. (See Sterner 1987.)

Person/Number	Realis 'come'	Irrealis 'come'
1SG	yomi	ima
2SG	umi	ama
3SG	ema	ama
1PL INCL	timi	tama
1PL EXCL	mimi	'a'ma
2PL	mimi	'a'ma
3PL	rimi	riama

Person/Number	Realis 'make'	Irrealis 'make'
1SG	yofi	yafei
2SG	ufi	afei
3SG	efei	afei
1PL INCL	tifi	tafei
1PL EXCL	mifi	'a'fei
2PL	mifi	'a'fei
3PL	rifi	riafei

Person/Number	Realis 'cry'	Irrealis 'cry'
1SG	yotin	itan
2SG	utin	atan
3SG	etan	atan
1PL INCL	titin	tatan
1PL EXCL	mitin	'a'tan
2PL	mitin	'a'tan
3PL	ritin	riatan

Person/Number	Realis 'eat'	Irrealis 'eat'
1SG	win	an
2SG	win	kin
3SG	an	an
1PL INCL	tin	ta'an
1PL EXCL	min	'e'kin
2PL	min	'e'kin
3PL	rin	riekin

Person/Number	Realis 'be'	Irrealis 'be'
1SG	wen	wan
2SG	wen	en
3SG	den	an
1PL INCL	ten	tan
1PL EXCL	men	'e'en
2PL	men	'e'en
3PL	ren	rie'en

External links

- Paradisec has two collections of Arthur Cappell's materials (AC1 (http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/AC1), AC2 (http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/AC2)) that include Sobei language materials.

References

1. Sobei (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/sob/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Sobei" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sobe1238). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

- Sterner, Joyce K. 1987. Sobei verb morphology reanalyzed to reflect POC studies. *Oceanic Linguistics* 14:146-167.
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